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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: APRIL 09, 2009

Summary: Most dailies on Thursday highlighted President Zardari's remarks made during his interview with British daily, "The Independent" that the "U.S. has promised no drone strikes in Balochistan." Also front-paged were reports that Taliban commander Mullah Nazeer Ahmad claimed that "Taliban will soon capture Islamabad." Newspapers gave prominent coverage to reports that "Swat Taliban move to gain foothold in adjacent Buner region." All newspapers highlighted comments by U.S. Special Envoy Holbrooke, currently visiting India, ruling out "nudging India to resume bilateral talks with Pakistan." The killing of four militants as a result of U.S. drone attack in South Waziristan Agency also received wide coverage. Reports and photographs of the meetings of Congressional delegation, led by John Kyl, with Pakistani government officials also garnered media attention.

Most major dailies continued to run editorials on the recent visit of Richard Holbrooke and Admiral Mike Mullen to Pakistan. The English daily, "Dawn," noted that "for the first time since the two joined hands in the battle against militancy, both sides have publicly acknowledged that they differ markedly on how the fight should be fought." Another English daily, "The News," observed that "for the first time since the new U.S. administration took over early this year, Washington and Islamabad have conceded that they distinctly differ on their approach to terrorism. The move by Islamabad to respond in no uncertain terms to Washington's demands is welcome." The second largest Urdu daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt," wrote: "This is a welcome development that our rulers, weary of repeated American demands, have courageously conveyed 'no-more' to the American officials." End Summary.

News Stories

"Balochistan to Be Spared Of Drone Raids, Zardari Assured" "Dawn"
(04/09)

"President Asif Ali Zardari has said the United States has assured Pakistan that it has no intention to extend drone attacks to Balochistan. 'President Obama has denied any such intentions to extend the use of drone attacks to Balochistan,' he said in an interview to a British newspaper 'The Independent.'"

"Al Qaeda Does Not Exist In Balochistan, U.S. Fears Not True: Chief Minister Raisani" "Jasarat" (04/07)

"Balochistan's Chief Minister Nawab Aslam Raisani while talking to media in Karachi has rejected the reports of Al Qaeda's presence in

Balochistan and has warned that if drone attacks were initiated against Balochistan they will meet severe resistance."

"Pakistan To Do U.S. Bidding If Drones Provided" "The News" (04/09)

"President Asif Ali Zardari has called on America to provide his country with an arsenal of drones and missiles to target militants blamed for a wave of violence rather than to carry out independent operations that violate the nation's sovereignty."

"Taliban Will Soon Capture Islamabad, Says Mullah Nazeer" "Daily Times" (04/09)

"Pakistani Taliban commander Mullah Nazeer Ahmed said in an interview with Al Qaeda's media arm, Al-Sahab, that the Taliban would soon capture Islamabad. Pakistani Taliban factions had united and would take their war to the capital, he said."

"Swat Taliban Move to Gain Foothold In Buner" "Dawn" (04/09)

"After consolidating their hold on Swat, militants in the valley have ventured into the adjacent Buner region and rejected calls by the local Qaumi Jirga to leave the district."

"U.S. Rejects Indo-Pak Mediation" "Dawn" (04/09)

"U.S. Af-Pak envoy Richard Holbrooke said in New Delhi on Wednesday that he sees peace in the region possible only with India's active support to the efforts undertaken by Pakistan and Afghanistan, but he ruled out nudging New Delhi to resume bilateral talks with Islamabad as a step in that effort."

"India, Pakistan, U.S. Face Common Threat, Says Holbrooke" "The News" (04/09)

"The threat posed by Al Qaeda and its allies can be met only with the joint efforts of arch rivals India and Pakistan, as well as the United States, U.S. envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke told reporters in New Delhi."

"U.S. Envoys Had 'Good Meetings' With Pak Leaders" "The News" (04/09)

"The United States on Wednesday said its top envoys, Special Representative for Region Richard Holbrooke and Chairman Joint Chiefs Admiral Mike Mullen, had constructive meetings with Pakistani leaders this week, adding it supports Islamabad in fighting extremism on Afghan border, State Department spokesman Robert Wood said at the daily briefing."

"Four Militants Killed In U.S. Drone In South Waziristan" "Dawn" (04/09)

"A suspected U.S. pilotless plane killed Four militants in an attack on a vehicle in South Waziristan on Wednesday."

"Obama's New Strategy Sours U.S.-Pakistan Ties" "Dawn" (04/09)

"U.S. President Barack Obama's new strategy is causing serious differences between the United States and Pakistan over how to fight the militants hiding in the Pak-Afghan region. U.S. think-tanks and the media believe that the differences revolve around two major issues: India's role in Afghanistan and the drone attacks at suspected terrorist targets inside Pakistan. In a report distributed on Wednesday, the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations noted that in their meetings with America's special envoy Richard Holbrooke and Chairman of U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, Pakistani officials contended that Washington showed disproportionate support for India in its bilateral relations with Pakistan."

"U.S. Criticized For Ignoring Pakistan's Concerns" "Dawn" (04/09)

"When they ask Pakistan to sever its alleged ties with the Taliban, U.S. officials focus on three militant leaders, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Commander Jalaluddin Haqqani and Commander Nazir. Diplomatic observers in Washington, however, acknowledge that while urging Pakistan to end its links to the militants, the Americans do not address the concerns and fears that force Pakistan to keep an option

other than the one offered by the United States."

"Drones May Have Hurt More Than Helped, Says U.S. Officials" "The Nation" (04/09)

"Concerns are growing among U.S. intelligence and military officials that the increasing drone attacks in Pakistan's tribal areas strikes are bolstering the insurgency by prompting Islamist radicals to disperse into the country's heartland, according to a media report."

"Extremists Relocating To Big Cities To Avoid Drone Attacks" "Daily Times" (04/09)

"Al Qaeda, Taliban and other militants have been relocating from the Tribal Areas to Pakistan's overcrowded and impoverished cities, which is likely to make it harder to find and stop them from staging terrorist attacks, officials say."

"Nawaz Asks U.S. To Deal FATA Politically" "The News" (04/09)

"PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif during a meeting with different foreign diplomats, members of the U.S. Senate and Congressmen has opposed the use of force and drone attacks in the tribal areas and stressed for need for resolving issues through dialogue."

"Envoys Support Nawaz's Stance On Drone Attacks" "Dawn" (04/09)

"Envoys of some European and Latin American countries as well as a group of U.S. Congressmen and Senators called on Pakistan Muslim League-N Chief Nawaz Sharif at his Raiwind residence on Wednesday, supported Nawaz's stance on drone attacks, and said the air-strikes were a violation of Pakistan's airspace."

"NA Committee Proposes Talks With Militants" "Dawn" (04/09)

"A Parliamentary Committee has outlined a new peace initiative, calling for initiating talks with extremists and militants who accepted the government's writ, instead of waiting for them to lay down arms."

"Clocks To Be Advanced On 15th" "Dawn" (04/09)

"The Federal Cabinet decided on Wednesday to advance the clock by one hour (GMT+6) from April 15 as an energy conservation measure."

Editorials/Op-eds

"A New Stance," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (04/09)

"For the first time since the two joined hands in the battle against militancy, both sides have publicly acknowledged that they differ markedly on how the fight should be fought.... Unfortunately, the Obama administration's policy on Pakistan is similar to that of its predecessor. Its tone, in fact, is even more aggressive and threatening.... Then there is the curious expectation that Pakistan will do more even as inflammatory stories are planted in the American press."

"Harsh Words," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/09)

"For the first time since the new US administration took over early this year, Washington and Islamabad have conceded that they distinctly differ on their approach to terrorism.... The move by Islamabad to respond in no uncertain terms to Washington's demands is welcome.... If Washington had believed it could simply bulldoze through its dictates, it has run into an obstacle."

"A Message To The U.S. That Says 'No More': Fulfill All Demands To Defend The Borders Now," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (04/09)

"This is a welcome development that our rulers, weary of repeated

American demands, have courageously conveyed 'no-more' to the American officials.... Our administration should not let any drone return in one piece.... This is the time for practical steps; America is an enemy country and not our ally and it should be dealt with accordingly."

"Has The Moment Of Decision Still Not Arrived?," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (04/09)

"Pakistan Foreign Minister's statement that they have drawn a red line before the U.S. and that the U.S. has acceded to Pakistan's posture of not launching ground attacks is an attempt to divert attention from the real issue. Ground attacks in the tribal areas have never been a priority with the U.S. Had the American troops been capable of succeeding in ground assaults they must have done so in Southern Afghanistan where they are at the mercy of the Taliban. The U.S. is just maintaining its edge in Afghanistan due to its aerial superiority and is also trying to wash away its embarrassment by launching aerial attacks in Pakistani tribal areas. If the Pakistani leadership acts with courage, then these drone attacks could be stopped."

"Don't Come Under U.S. Pressure," an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (04/09)

"The recent team of U.S. visitors was of diplomatic level, which met Pakistan's top leadership which is against diplomatic norms. These negotiations should have been held on the diplomatic level alone. By negotiating with the top Pakistani leadership the U.S. diplomats have tried to give a psychological impression that the U.S. still desires to continue its supremacy over the world and is still pursuing the uni-polar world order. The sole purpose of their visit was to brief their Pakistani interlocutors about the new U.S. policies and that how Pakistan should act upon those. It is high time the elected government of Pakistan acted with prudence in dealing with the U.S."

"Holbrooke-Mullen Mission ... U.S. Ambitions Have Come To The Fore," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (04/09)

"After coming into power, several Pakistani quarters were expecting President Obama that he would altogether change the policies of President Bush and would pursue reconciliation. But time has once again proven that faces change in the U.S. but the policies remain the same. The Obama administration is proving much worse than the Bush administration towards Pakistan."

"Trust Deficit," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (04/09)

"Many had hoped that as a result of the policy review, the Obama Administration would change the Bush-era shock and awe strategy. What one finds is that the new Administration is determined to follow in the footsteps of its predecessor, landing itself in a cul de sac as before. The recourse to the familiar carrot and stick policy won't help. No government that compromises on national sovereignty for the lure of enhanced American aid can survive long."

"Stop Drone Attacks And Give Technical Assistance," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (04/09)

"We see a crisis of confidence if we keep in perspective the U.S. and NATO military officials' statements on ISI and Pakistan Army.... Various aspects of this trust deficit should be pondered over by U.S. and Pakistani administrations and a joint strategy should be prepared.... American think-tanks and intelligence organizations are cognizant of the fact that these [drone] attacks are increasing Pakistanis' hatred against America. Actually, the presence of foreign forces and their action anywhere never solved problems."

"Drone Attacks: Debate In Parliament Needed," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (04/09)

"Pakistan has rejected American proposal for joint military

operation against terrorism and militancy in Pakistani tribal areas near the Afghan border.... Both the American officials visited with the notion of speaking sternly with Pakistani political and military leadership in order to pressurize Pakistan for doing more against terrorism. Not only Pakistani leadership strongly reacted to this notion, but also sternly rejected the U.S. allegation that Pakistani elements are providing protection to some Taliban elements and encouraging them to attack NATO forces."

"Pak-U.S. Relations And Demands Of The Situation," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 100,000) (03/09)

"Pakistan has rejected the U.S. proposal for a joint operation in the tribal areas and even on the drone attacks it has made clear to the U.S. that this policy in fact strengthening the extremists.... As far as U.S. allegations go, one aspect of this is that India and Afghanistan want to exert pressure on the U.S. to somehow weaken ISI. They know that ISI is working for Pakistan's interests and is defending the country on several fronts. No country, including the U.S., can be permitted to hurl allegations against our institutions.... The U.S. must now understand that future relations between the two countries will depend on mutual respect and trust."

"Correct Response To American Authorities," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (circ. 5000) (03/09)

"It is clear from the meetings between Pakistani and U.S. officials that the U.S. is not satisfied at the level of Pakistan's cooperation [against terrorism]. The U.S. feels that no option other than the drone attacks can stop the tribal militants from becoming a threat to America. The fact, however, is that the method America is adopting to eliminate its enemies is immediately creating new enemies for Pakistan. Pakistan cannot reject this option for very long. Pakistan immediately needs to adopt a policy against terrorism that is workable, satisfies the U.S., eliminates the militants and has national consensus."

"Review Policies," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (03/09)

"The shape of the new U.S. policy is very clear from statements made by U.S. representatives. Firstly, America has made up its mind that the solution to the Afghan war lies not in Afghanistan but Pakistan. In other words, Pakistan will be the center of the war on terror and this war will be fought on Pakistani soil.... The excuse will be Baitullah Mehsud and Al Qaeda leadership, but the actual target will be Pakistan's nuclear weapons."

"U.S. Should Respect Pakistan's Sovereignty," an editorial in the Hyderabad-based independent Sindhi Daily "Kawish" (Cir. 105,000) (04/09)

"Even the second visit of U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke to Pakistan has not helped resolve continued drone attack issue. Though the U.S. has declared Pakistan as a non-NATO ally but the level of trust is such that it refused to give these drones to Pakistan for furthering anti-terror agenda. The only feasible way for fighting terrorism now seems to be that the U.S. should equip Pakistani army so that Pakistan could act itself while the U.S. should respect Pakistan's sovereignty."

"U.S. Attacks To Continue," an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (04/09)

"U.S. special envoy for region Richard Holbrooke and Gen. Mike Mullen visited Pakistan to tell us that drone attacks would continue and that US army is going to buy 50 additional spy jets to speed up the attacks and that the day may not be far off when Balochistan too would be under attack on pretext of Al-Qaeda and Taliban presence there."

"America Suffers Isolation," an editorial in the Hyderabad-based liberal and independent Sindhi Daily "Ibrat" (Cir. 80,000) (04/09)

"Pakistan has rightly rejected the U.S. suggestion for joint operations in FATA. One should not even imagine that Pakistan would allow foreign armies to use its territory. U.S. is perceived in the world to be a country which is self-centered, and always promoting

its own interests thereby ignoring the concerns of other countries."

"New Afghan Policy And Richard Holbrooke's Visit," an editorial in Karachi-based pro-left and secular Sindhi Daily "Awami Awaz" (Cir. 70,000) (04/9)

"It gives people a sense of satisfaction that our government has a clear position on drone attacks and they presented their point of view courageously during their meetings with U.S. high officials. We expect that government would be successful in convincing the Obama administration to end drone attacks because it is in the interest of both the countries."

"Undue U.S. Pressure," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (04/09)

"The clear stance taken by the Pakistan government is an unexpected occurrence for the U.S. officials.... The tone and tenor of the U.S. officials is objectionable given Pakistan's total support to the war on terror. In the past, the Pakistan governments bent over backwards to defend the drone attacks and played down their impact. The U.S. has exploited the situation a bit too much.... The U.S. should understand that it is dealing with a democratic government in Pakistan that is responsible and is answerable to the people."

"America's Deepening Interest In FATA," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (04/09)

"Visit to Islamabad by Holbrooke and Admiral Mullen was basically aimed at pressurizing Pakistan to agree to the air operations in FATA by offering in return economic and security assistance.... Instead of using bullying tactics, it would be more appropriate if United States trust to the commitments of the political, military and intelligence leadership of Pakistan as nothing else would work to eradicate terrorism."

"U.S.-Pak: Agreeing To Disagree," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (04/09)

"Is this the parting of the ways? No, if you read into Foreign Minister Qureshi's announcement that discussion of the "differences" will be carried forward in the Afghan-Pak-US talks coming in the first week of May in Washington. Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani rallied behind his foreign minister by saying that Pakistan was capable of defeating terrorism, although the world is yet to see the first demonstration of this capacity. There was a promise of retreat from partnership in this as he complained of the non-receipt of the pledged \$1.5 billion meant for setting up special industrial zones in the tribal areas. The two sides are definitely testing each other on their separate needs to remain inside the anti-terror alliance."

"Obama's New Strategy," an op-ed by Tariq Fatemi in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (04/09)

"Obama's new strategy represents the beginning of a new and concerted effort to increase pressure on Pakistan. That is Holbrooke's likely mission, he has warned that U.S. patience is wearing thin, but he should know that Pakistan is more important to the U.S. than Afghanistan.... There are no easy solutions for either the U.S. or Pakistan. Both are paying the price of colossal errors and lapses."

"The CIA's Footprints," an op-ed by Ahmed Quraishi in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/09)

"The CIA faces its toughest test yet to prove wrong the suspicions of many within the Pakistani strategic community that some of the terrorism exported from Afghan soil into Pakistan has direct or indirect support from Washington.... In 2002, the Americans were allowed to establish bases in Balochistan and CIA was given the right to recruit Pakistanis in the tribal belt. These two areas of Pakistan are now the most disturbed parts of our country. And now our territory is being used to attack the interests of Iran and China. Washington is creating conditions across our western belt that would make it impossible for China to pursue trade and energy

corridors through Pakistan."

"'I've Got To Run': Holbrooke's Sham Press Conference," news commentary by Qudssia Akhlaque in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/09)

"U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke's much awaited first press conference in Islamabad on Tuesday turned out to be an utter anti-climax, if not a sham, with the unaccommodating American diplomat not conceding an inch to the curious Pakistani media.... Holbrooke, who was here on his second visit since assuming his new position, was put on the defensive by Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi's uncharacteristically hard-hitting opening statement in which for the first time Pakistan-U.S. sharp differences on key issues, particularly the drone strikes, surfaced loud and clear. Holbrooke seemed disconcerted by Qureshi's straight talk in the open about the existing irritants in the ongoing cooperation in the war on terror between the two allies."

"Are U.S. And Pakistan Parting Ways?," a news analysis by Hamid Mir in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (04/09)

"Despite all the Pak-U.S. misunderstandings, I am hopeful that we can move forward together with a new agenda with new priorities. I am hopeful because lot of young American students told me that they wanted peace not war. Many of them condemned the U.S. drone attacks in the Pakistani tribal areas because these attacks were a violation of the international law. They wanted to separate fiction from reality. We can definitely make each other secure by identifying the real problems with right solutions.
Patterson